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## Old Corydon

By CHARLES MOORES, Indianapolis, Member of the State Historical Commission

The sentimentalist is wont to personify a commonwealth as a broad-shouldered, underclad young woman lifting a torch or flourishing a sword or emptying a cornucopia. She commands deference because in her Amasonian presence—like that of our latter-day Golduh—no mere man would dare cross her purposes. Her monster physique offers no suggestion of a possible maternity, the normal function of a state, nor any hint of a useful occupation—although a state really ought to have something to do.

In the effort to set before you the picture of Indiana's birthplace I would personify our State, not as torchbearer, sword swinger or cornucopia-emptier, but as the mother of us all, who, at the close of her first century, is still young and strong and wise and fit to bear and rear and train her children for a place among America's idealists.

This year Indiana is struggling after a memory of her infancy. Like one who is world-weary she finds it hard to command a clear vision of the place where she was born. Many a loyal Hoosier shamefacedly confesses his ignorance of the capital of a hundred years ago and wonders where Corydon is and what it is like. Even the cultivated non-classicist pronounces it Corydon and the railway conductor calls it Croydon.

Where William Henry Harrison and John Tipton and Isaac Blackford and many a comrade and friend of Washington used to gather and James Monroe and Andrew Jackson received a royal hospitality, and while men were still talking of Napoleon, Indiana's tiny capital rested in village simplicity among sheltering elms and nestling hills.

To be great it is not necessary to be big. Richard Harding Davis was bigger than Robert Louis Stevenson, and

Shafter outweighed Napoleon. In the days when American civilization was in the making, more leaders gravitated toward Springfield and Richmond than ever enjoyed the hospitality of Kansas City or Chicago. In Corydon the capital there were only a score who had reached the age of forty-five.

In the decade of its primacy—from 1813 to 1824—the group who came there year after year to lay the foundations for a commonwealth were pioneers of a distinctive type. They were not unlettered men to whom learning had been denied, nor brawlers escaping the restraints of civilization, nor as in the Kentucky of 1800 or the Arizona of 1900, were they rebels against stable government who believed in a liquid and dilute constitution. On the contrary, many of them were missionaries of education and of political idealism who had come to Indiana to create a commonwealth with all the stability which the years of revolution and of constitutional reaction had made them covet so earnestly. At the same time they hoped to realize more completely than in the elder east the democracy of which Jefferson was the forerunner and Jackson the apostle. To them equality under a stable government was a passion and the exclusion of human slavery a religion.

The Corydon of a hundred years ago was a protest against commercialism. It had no metropolitan ambitions like Madison. It was not cosmopolitan like Vincennes. It had no river trade, no Indian trade, no land speculators. It was an easy-going, old-fashioned Virginia village, with an ambition to be decent and to cultivate the social spirit. Its older houses were log cabins, but it had some generous brick colonial residences, which still stand. Democracy had become a social ideal everywhere. The man in the big colonial house and the man in the log cabin neither patronized nor toadied. Labor was not self-assertive as it is today, for everybody labored. Wealth signified little, for the only commodity it could buy was land, and the more land a man had the more labor he had to provide. Where slavery was forbidden and labor scarce, men coveted large land-holdings about as much as a tired housewife longs for a big house with many rooms and no servants.

One way to judge the character of a town is by its representative men. Old Corydon as a social study calls for a broader view, for the student must consider the things done there and the men who did them; those whose labor drew them there from time to time as well as those to whom Corydon was home. Of the men who lived in Corydon while it was Indiana's capital, Dennis Pennington, John Tipton, Spier Spencer, and Isaac Blackford were probably the leaders, and of those whose duties brought them there often and kept them there, mention may be made of Governors William Henry Harrison, Jonathan Jennings, and William Hendricks, Treasurer Samuel Merrill, Secretary of State Robert A. New, and Judges Benjamin Parke, James Scott, and John Johnson.

Some of these were men of state-wide fame, but the one who is always identified in history and tradition with the fate and fortune of Harrison county is Dennis Pennington; from the time he came with the family of Daniel Boone and other adventure hunters at the dawn of the nineteenth century to open the wilderness and wrest it from the treacherous Indian, until long after his heroic fight to prevent the removal of the capital to Indianapolis he was Harrison county's trusted and devoted champion. His portrait done in oil hangs in the Representatives' Hall in the old capitol to show how far character can surpass human beauty.

Dennis Pennington's spelling was even more unconventional than Washington's. He gained his culture by the slow process of social attrition. He was too busy with the affairs of men to read books. He held closely and consciously to his heart the ideals of the community and from the earliest days threw the weight of no inconsiderable influence into the anti-slavery fight, warning a friend in 1815: "Let us be on our guard when our convention men are chosen that they be men opposed to slavery."

Dennis Pennington is remembered because he built the cutest little State house that was not hatched from an easter egg or set up to play dolls in; so ugly that men love to look at it. For nearly a generation he was a legislative leader, representing Corydon and serving as speaker in the Territorial legislature of 1810, and serving again in the Constitutional Convention of 1816, in thirteen sessions of the State

Senate and in five sessions of the House. Such scant records as are preserved of the early legislatures show that "Uncle Dennis" as he was called gave to the lawmaking in which he bore so conspicuous a part an unusual degree of horse sense and old-fashioned honesty. As representative of a river county he can not be blamed for trying to put off the inevitable eclipse of Corydon, and the removal of the capital, for it took longer then to travel from the river civilization to the semi-barbarism of Indianapolis than it requires now to go from Indianapolis to Constantinople, and the journey was fraught with graver dangers than those of floating mines or treacherous submarines. A brave fight he waged each winter, when the General Assembly took up its regular program of trying to lower the cost of boarding the legislators by threatening to adjourn to some cheaper town. No Hansard has preserved for us Uncle Dennis' blunt eloquence when he made his brave defense of the Corydon cuisine as against the cheap labor of Charleston's cooks. The danger was so real that even the Corydon *Indiana Gazette* of December 14, 1820, whose motto was "Willing to praise but not afraid to blame," and which discussed only questions of great import, came out December 14, 1820, boldly with this editorial utterance:

The old famous resolution to remove the legislature to Charleston or some other place where it is imagined members can get boarding lower than Corydon is going the formal rounds of legislation, when it is understood that no more is intended by it than to beat down the prices of boarding.

This nefarious measure was opposed by Simon Yandes of Marion and supported by the jurist Joseph Holman, the bloodthirsty fighter John Tipton, and the financier Samuel Merrill of Switzerland county. The price of board was fixed by law of the county commissioners at 37½ cents for breakfast or dinner, 25 cents for supper, and lodging 12½ cents, with whiskey at 37½ cents a quart. Whether legislative agitation brought it down, we shall never know, but the vote of 11 ayes to 16 noes shows that Corydon's cohorts won the skirmish under Dennis Pennington's leadership.

Samuel Merrill's account of the village in the *Indiana Gazeteer* for 1849 mentions the stone courthouse built by

the Speaker of the House of Representatives—and a better man the State never had—who it was said was often called from the hammer and trowel to the chair:

The other buildings there, not exceeding one hundred in number, were either cabins or of hewn logs. As the town was but little visited except during the sessions of the legislature, there was then often a large crowd, while the means of accommodation were not in proportion. The supplies came from Louisville, twenty-five miles distant; but the state of the roads and streams was such that no regularity could be relied on. Whenever anything was wanting the arrival of the wagon from Louisville was to supply the deficiency. As this explanation was often given, much merriment was excited one morning by a modest boarder's being asked, when he had no plate, knife or fork, whether he too was waiting for the wagon.

*Received of Samuel Merrill nine dollars fifty  
for conveying the Law Library to Indianapolis  
from Corydon  
Corydon Dec. 20. 1824  
Barton Library  
Wm. and H. Ray*

#### EXPENSE FOR MOVING LAW LIBRARY

Captain Spier Spencer, more than Tipton or Harrison, was Corydon's military hero. His company of Indian fighters adopted a uniform that justified their warlike name—Spencer's Yellow Jackets—and made life at the frontier capital safe, while it brought a certain military glory to the little town. When real warfare broke out in 1811 and Tecumseh and the Prophet had to be suppressed, Corydon was proud of its fighting company as they marched out in their yellow finery to join the regulars and Kentucky militia under William Henry Harrison's command.

Spencer was territorial sheriff of the county from 1809 to 1811, and at the same time kept the village tavern, which his wife continued for many years after his heroic death at Tippecanoe.

On that fatal November morning in 1811 Spencer's Yellow Jackets held the place of greatest danger through the

darkness in which the Prophet's braves had hoped to surprise them. A survivor of the fight reported that firing was so constant that the bark was flying from the trees. He could see the Indians in the half darkness running from point to point with tomahawk and scalping knife and bow and arrow, trying to finish their work of destruction before the whites could organize to resist, while Spencer kept calling incessantly, "Hold the line, men; hold the line." They did hold the line till daybreak. "As the fight continued," this pioneer's story goes on, "we got the welcome order to fix bayonets and charge. We moved on while as the men fell I could hear Captain Spencer's voice—'Close up, men! Steady! Steady!'" The captain of the line was wounded in the head, but fought on. He was shot through both thighs and fell. The men raised him up so he could see to give his commands and a ball through the body brought his brave life to an end. Spencer's boy, twelve years old, was brought back from this tragic scene to civilization by General Harrison and educated by Harrison for West Point.

General John Tipton was more than a local figure in Indiana's pioneer life. So long as history was being made at Corydon he belonged there, and there his descendants still live. He was first sheriff of the county, having already laid the foundation of his greatness by serving as justice of the peace.

In 1818 the county board made him custodian of the courthouse and "accountable for any damage that may be sustained by reason of any societies of people either religious or otherwise occupying said courthouse."

Governor Jennings in 1820 appointed him one of the commissioners to locate the "scite" for the permanent seat of government, and the Corydon paper records on May 18 that Gen. John Tipton left that place yesterday for White river, accompanied by his excellency the governor, to fix the location for the new capital, and notes his return in the issue of June 25th. Next year he was serving again in the legislature and was chosen as a commissioner to lay off the town of Indianapolis on the site he had helped to choose.

In 1820 he announced his candidacy for the legislature in a thoroughly frank way:

As my term of sheriff is expiring and I will not be eligible for reelection, I am a candidate for the legislature. As actions speak louder than words, having resided twelve years among you, nine of which I have been in office, it is unnecessary to say more than that I have become a candidate unsolicited.

No Machiavellian pretense about that! In 1823 he was vice-president with Governor William Hendricks presiding, at the grandest Fourth of July celebration the world ever witnessed. In 1831 he became United States Senator by appointment, and in 1832 by election. Besides locating and directing the survey of Indianapolis he surveyed the disputed Illinois boundary, and tried his best to locate Chicago in the Hoosier State. He donated part of the site of Columbus and became a prominent citizen of Fort Wayne, and Logansport, where he died in 1839. His fame was won at the Battle of Tippecanoe, and because his comrades were buried there he bought the Battleground and gave it to the State. For all his civic activities it was as an Indian fighter that he was longest remembered.

Tipton's father had been killed by the Indians, and the boy as he grew up needed no encouragement to become an Indian fighter. He understood the ways of the savage and met their stealth and treachery and merciless cruelty with equal stealth and cruelty, but with high courage. As frontier sheriff he had no trouble in dealing with lawless characters. He was a scrapper and a rough rider, and he carried a big stick and used it, though he did not talk about it before and after as other fighting characters in American history have been known to do. At the battle of Tipton's Island, a little Indian skirmish near Seymour, one of his command, a stalwart Hoosier, persisted in talking, despite Tipton's order of silence. When a reminder of the order proved ineffective, Tipton took the ranger's gun from him, tied him to a tree in the tall weeds and left him there an ignominious captive until the battle was over.

Two years earlier Tipton was with Indiana Territory's first governor at Tippecanoe. It was one of the last important Indian engagements east of the Mississippi river, and although there were less than two thousand engaged, the consequences were vastly significant.



General John Charles Black, whom many of this club have heard and admired, said:

Had Harrison failed here . . . there would have been no mourning along the St. Lawrence and no bitter withdrawal to the Rio Grande, but instead, pushing forward to the very feet of the Alleghenies the uprising power of Great Britain would have helped to choke and destroy the infant republic that she hated.

William Henry Harrison was victorious, and by his gallant conduct captured the imagination of the American people and won and held through all too short a life the passionate affection of the people of the West. Eleven heroes of Tippecanoe who won immortality on that bloody field gave their names to Indiana counties. Of these, Harrison, Parke, Floyd, Spencer, and Tipton were well known at the little capital that was to be.

John Tipton was twenty-five years old when the slaughter began, Captain Spier Spencer of the Yellow Jackets fell, and immediately after, his first lieutenant, and Ensign Tipton took charge of the company. General Harrison rode up to the young ensign and asked, "Where is your captain?" "Dead, sir," was the reply. "Where is your lieutenant?" "He is dead, too, sir." "Who is in command of this company?" "I am, sir," was young Tipton's answer. "Hold your own, my brave boy," Harrison replied, "and I will send you reinforcements." The young ensign was elected captain, so his comrade, Isaac Naylor, tells us, "as a reward for his cool and deliberate heroism displayed during the action."

It was largely Tipton's influence that led to the naming of so many of Indiana's counties after the heroes of Tippecanoe.

In the federal Senate Tipton was a conservative opponent of the extension of slavery. As long ago as 1836 he was an earnest advocate of preparedness and a greatly strengthened army, and when he differed with the president he declared:

I do not stand here to register the executive will, but look for my instruction to the boys of the West, those with hard hands, warm hearts, and strong arms, who fell the forest, hold the plough and repel foreign invasion.

Oliver H. Smith, who served with Tipton in the Senate of the United States, describes him as having a round head, a low, wrinkled forehead, sunken gray eyes, stern countenance and stiff, reddish hair, grown pompadour; a man of great energy, frank and confiding. "He saw the question clearly," his colleagues tells us, "and marched directly at it without any rhetorical flourishes. . . . When his term ended we parted warm friends; with the last grasp of my hands as he bade me farewell, his voice choked and the tears ran down his cheeks."

An advertisement in the Corydon newspaper of October 28, 1819, shows much of the advertiser's personality:

RETURN MY BOOKS AND I WILL LEND AGAIN

The persons who have borrowed of me, Scott's *Military Discipline*, with the plates; The *Naval History of the U. S.*; Duane's *Handbooks for Infantry and Rifle Corps*, *History of the Late War*, Webb's *Monitor*, Steuben's *Military Guide*, and *The Trial of Gen. Hull*, will confer a favor by returning them immediately.

JOHN TIPTON.

It proves that the pioneer sheriff was not lacking in literary and military taste.

Corydon's best known citizen, at least until her much loved Walter Q. Gresham became judge and cabinet minister, was Isaac Blackford. In 1786, the same year that John Tipton was born in the backwoods of Sevier county, Tennessee, Isaac Blackford was born at Bound Brook, New Jersey. He entered Princeton, where he made a brilliant record in Latin and Greek, excelled in mathematics, and graduated in 1806. He studied law and began the practice in Morristown, New Jersey, but responded to the call of the wild and in 1811 floated down the Allegheny and the Ohio on a flatboat to Lawrenceburg. In 1812 he was at Brookville, (qualifying there for greatness as all early Hoosiers did). In 1813 he was clerk and recorder at Salem, and in 1816 he was at Vincennes, where next year he was elected to the legislature and sent to Corydon, to receive almost immediately from Governor Jennings his appointment as judge of the supreme court. His judicial duties identified him with the life of Corydon until 1825, when the removal to Indianapolis took place. He held his place on the supreme bench by repeated

appointments from 1817 until 1851, when the new constitution, to Indiana's shame, made the supreme bench elective and made it possible to turn the control of that court over to the politicians.

Blackford was defeated for governor in 1825, and the same year he failed by a single vote of an election to the United States Senate. It was as a judge and a reporter of supreme court decisions that he became famous, and as an interpreter of the Common Law Blackford's *Reports* of what were largely Isaac Blackford's decisions introduced him to the courts of America and England and won for him a position of the highest authority. In his Corydon days his recognized scholarship, his courtesy and his high character, won for him the respect of a community that had free and friendly ways and yet for a frontier settlement had more than its share of dignity and self-respect. The loneliness of Judge Blackford's widowed life found its compensation in the companionship of books and the contact his scholarship brought him with the scholarly men of an exceptionally intelligent frontier community.

The early settlement of Indiana owed much to Daniel Boone, the woodsman and trapper and Indian fighter who in his frequent journeys over the Wilderness Trail had led the caravans of emigrants out of Virginia and Pennsylvania and over the Cumberland mountains into the heart of Kentucky. But his explorations and long hunting journeys were not confined to Kentucky, for the wild life north of the Ohio river soon called him into Indiana, and before 1800 he was pitching his hunting camp among the hills of Harrison county. The earliest of those who came to live in that picturesque county were Dennis Pennington and Squire Boone, brother of Daniel Boone. Squire Boone was a famous hunter, the tales of whose strange adventures with bears and with Indians are still told about the old county seat at Corydon.

This region is historic ground, on the edge of the battleground which divided the half-civilized Indians of the south from the savages of the north. It was subject to incursions from these irreconcilable enemies. It was a land of game; bear, deer, and turkeys were abundant. Notwithstanding the danger of the situation, this hunting ground soon at-

tracted the attention of the Boones and other Kentucky pioneers. Every excursion was a scouting expedition, every trail a war path. On one of their hunting expeditions Squire Boone, in passing along the eastern bluff of Buck creek, noticed a small opening in the rocks, partially hidden by bushes. It appeared to be a good hiding place for large game. A few miles further on he was attacked by Indians. His only chance was to hide. He remembered the cave he had just discovered, and reached it when his pursuers were at his very heels. Throwing himself into the cave he heard the Indians pass over his head. The little cavern had saved his life. To him it was a sanctuary. He chose it as his place of burial, a natural sepulchre.

A rough stone in the hillside closes the entrance to Boone's grave. About seven feet within is a little room where a recent search disclosed the broken coffin and the exposed bones of Squire Boone, a man of stalwart frame and of great strength.

Squire Boone spent his latter days near this cave. A great spring poured its torrent from the cave down the hillside, having a fall of eighteen feet. Here he built a mill of stone almost wholly with his own hands. On many of the blocks he carved quaint figures and emblems. A trailing vine in full leaf and laden with fruit was cut upon the lintels, and figures of deer, fishes, a horse, a cow, a lion, a human face, and stars, and many texts from the Bible, were sketched upon the stone in different parts of the building. Over the doorway was this inscription, "The traveler's rest. Consecrated by Squire Boone, 1809." Over another door is the following: "I sit and sing my soul's salvation, and pledge the God of my creation."

The settlement of Harrison county proceeded rapidly. Among the first to enter land in the county was Governor Harrison himself, who in 1804 bought from the government the land where Corydon stands and held it for a short time. Three years later he took up other land in the same region and built a water mill and set out a large orchard, some of whose trees were still standing a century later.

There were 640 acres of this Harrison farm, and the place was so much esteemed that in 1818 when the Governor had

to sell it and go back to Ohio it brought him \$10,000. Every part of Harrison's Valley recalls its first owner, one plot being known as the Governor's Field, another the General's Meadow. The valley is almost an amphitheater, walled by limestone hills. In the middle is the Harrison spring, in a basin rimmed with a natural stone wall two feet high, filled with pure, clear water hundreds of feet deep and flowing in a strong stream that widens in time of flood to a torrent at the spring and flows out in a stream one hundred feet wide and ten feet deep. From the spring to Blue river, a few hundred yards distant, there is a fall of eight feet, and the power is used to run a mill. And so the Governor erected a mill here and employed himself between campaigns as a farmer and miller. General Harrison is said to have received the grain with his own hands and carried it to the hopper. Only a few shrubs and a part of the orchard he planted so carefully survive to mark the Harrison home.

William Henry Harrison was twenty-seven years old when he began his administration at Vincennes. His duties and his personal interest brought him often to Harrison county. On one of these journeys as he passed through the new settlement that was to be the seat of government he was asked to give a name to the village. It was at Edward Smith's cabin, where the county fair grounds now are. The young governor, whose taste for music and verse was of the somber-sentimental sort which Abraham Lincoln so greatly admired, had asked, as usual, that Jennie Smith, his host's pretty daughter, might sing his favorite song, "The Pastoral Elegy."

Modern experts have tried in vain to wring music out of the song. The singer must have been singularly attractive or the young governor would not have stood for it. It seems that one Corydon had recently deceased and his fiancée, Caroline, with the gracious co-operation of a nightingale, was inflicting her grief on a melancholy world:

"O, Corydon! hear the sad cries  
Of Caroline plaintive and slow;  
O Spirit look down from the skies  
And pity the mourner below."

Caroline was plaintive, all right, and she may have been slow, but Corydon's name is linked forever with that of our first State capital. And the attractive name the village received may be credited to Governor Henry Harrison's bad taste in music.

The chief function of the village newspaper a hundred years ago was to print the news from abroad, necessarily from a month to three months after the fact, and to keep the readers of Indiana informed as to the doings at Washington. In a village of 300 inhabitants, more than two-thirds of whom were under 26 years old, local news such as we search the daily press for would have been absurd. Everybody of course knew everybody else's doings. So one finds few such items in the Corydon files of that early day. And yet the columns of the Corydon *Indiana Gazette* reveal the social life of the village in a way its editor and its readers a century ago did not dream of. Even the advertisements give us glimpses of the way society lived.

John Martin will give liberal prices for bear skins, grey fox, red fox, mink, muskrat, otter, raccoon, rabbit. Also beeswax.

Here was an innocent fur trader, perhaps, the sort we read about in histories and dime novels. And yet there were strange doings at Mr. Martin's place if *Senex* is to be believed, especially during the legislative sessions, for we find this savage communication in the issue for New Year's Day 1823:

MESSRS. EDITORS:

Suffer me through your paper to recommend Mr. Martin to break up the *rendezvous* at his house, otherwise he will be complained of at the next Circuit Court for the County of Harrison. Also members of the General Assembly who are in the practice of resorting thither are admonished to desist or their names and their conduct will be exposed to their constituents. The makers of laws should not be lawbreakers.

SENEX.

There is a modern touch about this:

NOTICE

Oct. 9, 1819.

The subscriber wishes the person who borrowed his *Great Coat* (without leave) to return it immediately as he is *known* and it will prevent further expense.

D. B. FOANS.

Here is an advertisement inserted in the leading newspaper west of Ohio, between whose lines may be read a story of separation and possible unhappiness growing out of the impending failure of the Rappite experiment at Harmonie:

INFORMATION WANTED

Stephen Bach, who lately came from Germany, wishes to know where his brother-in-law, John Jonas, now resides. They (Bach and Jonas) came to America about the same time, since which Bach has received one letter from said Jonas, directed to Harmonie, Indiana. Any person who may be able to give any information respecting Mr. Jonas at this time will confer a particular favor by communicating it to the Rev. George Pfrimmer, near Corydon, Indiana.

The German paper at Lancaster, Ohio, will please insert the above once or twice and the favor will be reciprocated when occasion requires.

And this is an advertisement to show that domestic science and vocational training were a part of our educational system almost a hundred years before our progressive educators of the twentieth century discovered "the new education."

EDUCATION

HARRIET TARTLTON, *Milliner*, (from Baltimore) Intends opening a school in Corydon on the 1st day of April next for the

EDUCATION OF YOUNG LADIES

and pledges a careful attendance to the instruction and moral conduct of such as may be committed to her charge.

PRICE:

For Reading, Writing and plain sewing, \$2 per quarter; Embroidery, \$4 per quarter; Boarding, \$1.25 per week, exclusive of washing; Country produce will be taken in payment for boarding at the market prices.

And here is another:

LADIES SCHOOL

Mrs. MITCHELL and Mrs. BAKER will teach young ladies committed to their care the following branches of education, viz: Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammer, Logic, Rhetoric, Geography, Composition. Also Plain sewing, sampler and cotton work.

The social instinct in Corydon while not exhausted in entertaining the legislative multitudes every winter found its outlet in the main in simple things. Thus the *Gazette* announces:

Singing is appointed in the Senate Room on next Friday the 11th of June (1819) at 6 o'clock p. m. and singers are invited and requested to attend.

The following November the spirit of music was revived by this notice:

(Nov. 27, 1819.) The young ladies and gentlemen of Corydon are requested to meet in the Senate Chamber on Thursday evening next at early candle light for the purpose of singing and forming a singing school.

Next to the singing school as a means of uplift was the debating society, whose transactions are reported all too seldom in the public press. Two of these accounts were all I was able to discover. These meetings were in June, 1820, and were published as paid advertisements:

CORYDON DEBATING SOCIETY  
(June 15, 1820)

The following question will be discussed by this society on tomorrow evening commencing at half past 6 in the Representatives' Hall:

*Which is most admired, Virtue or Beauty?*

The ladies and gentlemen of the place are respectfully invited to attend.  
R. McCULLOUGH, Sec'y.

CORYDON DEBATING SOCIETY  
(June 22, 1820)

The following question will be discussed by this society on tomorrow evening commencing at half past 6 in the Representatives' Hall:

*In which does Virtue shine most brilliant, the Male or Female?*

R. McCULLOUGH, Sec'y.

How the "Females" came out is impossible to tell, for they could not afford to pay to advertise the result and the press was mercenary. But the sex was enormously self-conscious in those days. They did not try to force their propaganda upon any historical pageants as they are doing nowadays, but they were bent on treating women as a distinct order of creation. Witness this advertisement of the proposed Connersville publication:

(9-10-23) Prospectus of a New Periodical Work to be published at Connersville, Indiana, entitled *Western Ladies' Casket*, and Edited by a Female. "Improve, excel, surmount, subdue your fate."

The entire tendency of this publication will be to disseminate useful knowledge and to excite a taste for mental improvement, particularly among



the female part of the community. . . . As this perhaps, is the first publication attempted to be published by a female in the western country a hope is entertained that it will not be deficient in merit or short in duration for want of a liberal support. \$1.00 a year.

A later issue contained a poem on "Female Literature."

Brains were not the only feminine equipment that came in for improvement, for a dispatch from Liverpool is published in the issue of August 21, 1819, announcing the invention of a velocipede for females.

Those of us who have provided funds for foreign missions are but paying back for the gifts our seaboard patrons made to convert the heathen in Indiana a hundred years ago. Religious services in old Corydon were in the main a community affair, unimpaired in their efficiency by any sectarian influences. The Corydon paper during the ten years when the seat of government was located there mentions no local sectarian services.

In January, 1819, this announcement appears as the leader on the editorial page:

The Reverend Mr. Rogers, missionary to the State of Indiana, will preach tonight at candle-light and tomorrow at 12 m. at the courthouse.

And this (March 10, 1824) :

Adam Payne, a traveling preacher from Kentucky, will preach in the courthouse tonight at candle light.

The news columns contained the story of religious revivals in New York and New England and in time Corydon came in for its share of the spiritual interest. I quote:

It will be peculiarly grateful to the lovers of Christianity to hear of the revival of religion which has taken place in this town. A few weeks ago our streets exhibited little else than intemperance and profanity; but now so far has the scene changed that morality seems to predominate in every quarter through the day and at night the sound of prayer, praise and the shouts of new-born souls cheer the evening shades.

Henry P. Coburn was clerk of the supreme court. His name is a familiar one in Indianapolis. He was the superintendent of the community Sunday school which kept up the atmosphere of righteousness in the Senate Chamber when the General Assembly was not in session.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

(June 21, 1821)

The advantages of this institution are clearly manifest by the progress the scholars make in learning. Two boys of Mr. James Kirkpatrick distinguished themselves on last Sunday by the number of verses they rehearsed by memory, which they committed the week previous. James, who is eight years old, rehearsed 118 verses; and Moses, who is seven years old, rehearsed 101 verses.

Here is the only published fiscal statement of the Corydon Sunday School Society:

\$6.50 in paper, \$2.50 in specie, \$2.12½ in branch of Indiana Bank, 10 of McDonald's *Spelling Books*, 5 Webster's *Spelling Books*, 7 *Philadelphia Primer*, 5 of *New England Primer*.

J. JENNINGS and BENJ. ADAMS, *Committee*.

J. Jennings was governor of Indiana and Benjamin Adams was a local statesman whose descendants are among the best people of Corydon to this day.

Intemperance was not as disreputable then as it has come to be. At election time—and they held general elections every summer while the legislature elected State officers every winter—there was some drinking as we note from this editorial of August 16, 1821:

We congratulate the citizens of Harrison county that the late election has been conducted more decently than the election of last year. Nevertheless there is much room yet to mend. We were mortified to hear some severe censure on the immoderate use of whiskey coming from the mouths of some respectable strangers who were visitants to our town and attentive observers of the passing scenes of the day. Surely candidates for office would not wish to have it understood that their popularity rests upon the strength of whiskey, nor would the voters succumb to the pitiful idea that they would barter their liberty for a *dram*. Then there can be no good reason that the day of election should exhibit scenes of intoxication grating to the feelings of every good man. The laws of the state as well as those of morality are against the practice and if nothing else will effect a reformation the civil authority ought to take cognizance thereof.

The Fourth of July was observed as a community affair; sometimes fittingly and sometimes not, but always by the entire populace. J. Tarlton, who kept one of the taverns and was an unsuccessful candidate for office, advertised (June 29, 1821):

I will prepare a Dinner and furnish plenty of Domestic Liquors at my house in Corydon on the 4th of July, where gentlemen are invited to attend. Price \$1 per head.

J. TABLTON.

A representative Independence Day program is preserved in full:

Fourth of July. At daylight in the morning the day was announced by a discharge of the 6 pounder. Governor Hendricks was selected President and John Tipton Vice-President of the day. At 11 o'clock notice of the meeting was announced by a second gun at the Court House, when the Declaration of Independence was read by H. H. Moore, which was followed by an address appropriate to the occasion by Benjamin Hurst in presence of a large concourse of citizens. From thence the procession, formed agreeably to the previous arrangements, proceeded to Littell's Spring, where the company partook of a dinner prepared by Thomas Highfill under a bower erected for the purpose. After the cloth was removed a number of patriotic toasts were drank, accompanied with platoons of musketry and loud huzzas. From the spring the company returned in the same order of procession to town, where they were dismissed in good order and harmony about 5 o'clock p. m.

#### TOASTS

1st. The day—May it never be forgotten as long as liberty warms the American bosom.

2nd. The United States. The home of happiness, the refuge of the oppressed—may their fraternal affection be entwined by the cord of patriotism.

3rd. Presidents Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, etc.

4th. Army.

5th. Navy.

6th. Porter's Squadron, The Scourge of Pirates.

7th. South American Republics.

8th. Seminaries of Learning—may the genius of liberty revolve around them.

9th. Domestic Manufactories—the hum of the wheel, the rattling of the Loom, and the ginging Cash are far more musical than the rustling of Silks with an empty purse.

10th. Internal Improvements.

11th. Commerce and Agriculture of the West.

12th. State of Indiana—may it discern with wisdom and with energy pursue the public good.

13th. The American fair—While their smiles are destined to grace and ornament virtue the sons of America will not be the votaries of vice.

They were eloquent in those days as the following brief paragraph from an oration by John N. Dunbar delivered in the old capitol will prove:

The sad and helpless orphan left unfriended and alone in the wild and merciless ocean of life, without one friend to guide, one smile to cheer him, struggling against the threatening wave that rises to engulf him, looks with an aching eye and desolate heart upon the benighted course his hard untoward destiny points out. There is no glimmering of joy for him. Futurity holds out to him no loved, no cherished expectation; and retrospection but serves to show him the withered fragments of the bliss his youthful nature painted. He has no wish but death.

The biggest day in all the village history was the one that brought to little Corydon James Monroe, President of the United States, and Major General Andrew Jackson, America's popular idol. They were met by the citizens, escorted into town, where they were welcomed by the most cordial feelings. At four o'clock the President, General Jackson and suit, dined with the governor. The invitation to a public dinner to be given by the citizens was declined.

Enjoyable as the Fourth of July and presidential parties must have been, another function took place at Corydon that would have interested me more. Here is the announcement:

Natural Curiosities will be exhibited at Corydon on the 3rd and 4th of December; the

AFRICAN LION, FULL GROWN,  
THE AFRICAN LEOPARD,  
THE COUGAR FROM BRAZIL,  
THE SHETLAND PONY, WITH ITS RIDER,  
THE ICHNEUMEN AND SEVERAL OTHER ANIMALS.

Admission 25 cts. Children under 12 years of age half price. Good music on the ancient Jewish Cymbal and other instruments. Hours of Exhibition 10 a. m. until 5 p. m. (November 26, 1823.)

Sensational events sometimes occurred. I read from the issue of March 27, 1819:

#### LAMENTABLE ACCIDENT

On Saturday last in the vicinity of this place a woman of colour was killed by a yearling calf. The animal became impatient for its accustomed food and thrust his horn into her body. She expired in ten minutes. Let this be a caution to the unwary. She has left a husband and numerous family of children, to whose evident distress and unfeigned sorrow should cause to blush the proud *intelligence* who *boasts* of his exclusive possession of those refined feelings which *distinguish* and add dignity to man.

A strong sense of duty to a bound boy is proved by the following display advertisement. I should say its publisher must have been a Puritan if it were not for his sense of humor:

ONE CENT REWARD

Ran away from the subscriber September 1819, John Napper, who was bound to me to learn the tanning business. He is about 16 years of age, 5' 8 or 9" high, black hair, blue eyes. The above reward will be given if delivered to me in Spencer county, Indiana, but no thanks.

by JOHN GREATHOUSE.

There was actual slavery in Corydon despite the intense anti-slavery feeling of Governor Jennings and Dennis Pennington and the other social and political leaders of the community. Thus in 1812 the county records show that Amy, a woman of color, of full age, indentured herself to the services of Isaiah Boone and his family and heirs for seventy-five years in return for his agreement to furnish her with clothing and "suitable diet." Isaac Blackford and his associates on the supreme court early declared slavery in Indiana to be unconstitutional. (See volume 1 of Blackford's *Reports*.) But long after negro apprenticeships ceased to be, there were negro-hunts in Harrison county, and the greed of slave owners was stimulating and strengthening the abolition spirit north of the Ohio.

We can imagine the subtle effect of this little paragraph published January 23, 1819:

We are informed that Susan, a woman of color, who was kidnapped some months ago, has returned into the neighborhood of this place. She made her escape from the boat descending the Ohio somewhere about the mouth of the Tennessee river. It is expected she will have her trial for her freedom at the next term of the court if she is not again kidnapped before that time.

I have told nothing of Corydon's political history—of her constitutional convention that met beneath her splendid elm a hundred years ago next month, or of her part in the Civil War, when John Morgan's raiders fought a bloody skirmish in her streets, for that would be history, and this paper is meant only as a brief social study. Despite the temptation to gossip and expand, I have had to omit most of the fascinating detail of

Do the Speaker of the House of Representatives  
 Sir In obedience to the act entitled an act establishing  
 the permanent seat of Government of the State  
 of Indiana and of the joint Resolution  
 respecting the furniture belonging to the State  
 at Corydon, I have the honor to state that  
 the following expenses have been incurred and  
 paid for removing the Records public property  
 &c. from Corydon to Indianapolis.

To Messrs Pory and Wilson their account 7,56 1/4  
 for boxes and nails, vouchers no 1.

To Mr Lippin for one box voucher no 1 50

To Mr Licens and Seybert for the trans-  
 portation of 3945 lb voucher No. 3. \$74,94

To Jacob and Samuel Kinoy for 35,06  
 the transportation of one load No 4 \$118,06

De. Hunt proceeds of sale of furniture 52,52  
 as per <sup>statement</sup> bill no 5 \$65,54

The above sum ~~is~~ should be allowed to me provided the

Legislature approve of the payments made

EXPENSE ACCOUNT FOR MOVING THE CAPITAL. BY SAMUEL MERRILL

her social life, retaining only enough to help us project our imagination into the capital of Indiana as it was a hundred years ago and realize for ourselves how men lived then.

It was but a village. Its biggest men would be counted young to cope with such responsibilities in our modern day. They were young, but they possessed scholarship and character. Harrison, Jennings, Blackford, New, Merrill, and Benjamin Parke were classical students—several of them teachers by profession and by choice, readers and gatherers of the best books. And Pennington and Spencer and Tipton were men of valor and character. These pioneer patriots gave of their own character to the State whose foundation they laid. They were young for such genuine achievement. In 1816 Jennings was 32, Hendricks 33, Tipton 30, Blackford 30, Ratliff Boon 35, Samuel Merrill 24.

It will be recalled of the largest and wickedest city of all time that ten righteous men were deemed enough for its salvation. The character of a community for righteousness and for lesser things, scholarship and self-respect and ability to achieve is determined by a few men whose leadership it recognizes. Corydon was righteous, for its men were of the saving sort. And so of Indiana. To the purity and strength of its pioneers as well as that of the pioneers of its later capital, Indianapolis, is due the fact that Indiana has been able to prove that righteousness exalteth a people.